

CIA/OGCR/PN 61-2684/75 ITEM 13

UNCLASSIFIED-CHINA CITY BRIEF WEATHER CONDITIONS

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ITEM 13

CHINA CITY BRIEF

MICROFILMED



WEATHER CONDITIONS IN THE PRC

Visitors to the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) should expect a wide range of climatic conditions -- particularly if visits are made during spring and autumn when temperature changes are most frequent and abrupt. The enormous north-south extent of Chinese territory -- from about the latitude of Winnipeg to that of Jamaica -- is the principal reason for the great contrasts in climate. Several general characteristics about China's climate (excluding the deserts of northwestern China and the high Tibetan Plateau) that hold regardless of the part of China visited include:

... Seasonal temperatures differ greatly in nearly all parts of the country.

... Winter temperatures are lower for areas at latitudes (and elevation) comparable to those in the United States; summer temperatures are more nearly the same.

... Although summer rains are common and humidity levels high in all of the PRC, the length of the rainy season is longer and the amount of rainfall considerably greater south of the Yangtze River.

... Winters are dry with little precipitation, particularly in the North and Northeast where spring also is a season of little rain.

Selected temperature and precipitation data and clothing recommendations for travel are presented in the accompanying charts for those PRC cities most commonly visited by foreigners. This information is grouped by the major regions, each of which has distinctive climatic features. A brief description of each region follows.

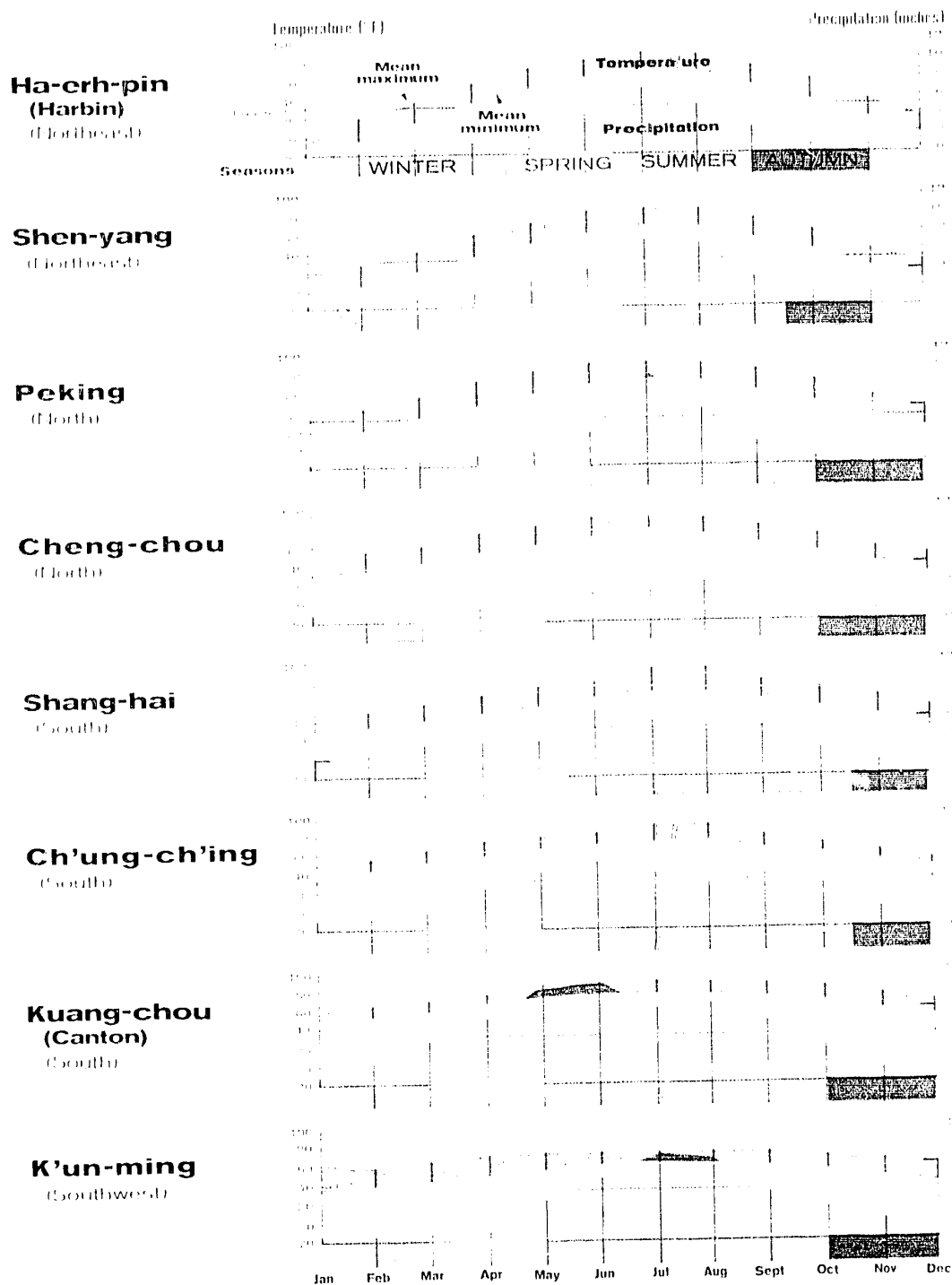
Northeast: When referring to the Northeast, the Chinese term Tung-pei is used in preference to the outdated and disliked term "Manchuria." As the major industrial region in the PRC, and also the location of the famed Ta-ching oilfield, visitors to the Northeast may visit one or more of the several large industrial cities such as Sheng-yang, An-shan, or Ha-erh-pin. The Northeast Plain, extending north-south for some 600 miles, is also one of China's major granaries. Winters are particularly long and severe and the climate overall is similar to that of Minnesota and southern Alberta.

North: North China includes the middle and lower valley of the Huang Ho (Yellow River), the intensively cultivated North China Plain, and the eroded hills and mountains to the west. In addition to Peking, visitors occasionally visit Tientsin or industrial towns such as Cheng-chou or Sian. The climate is roughly similar to Kansas-Nebraska except that North China winters have relatively little rain or snow. Considerable haze and occasional duststorms occur during late winter and spring.

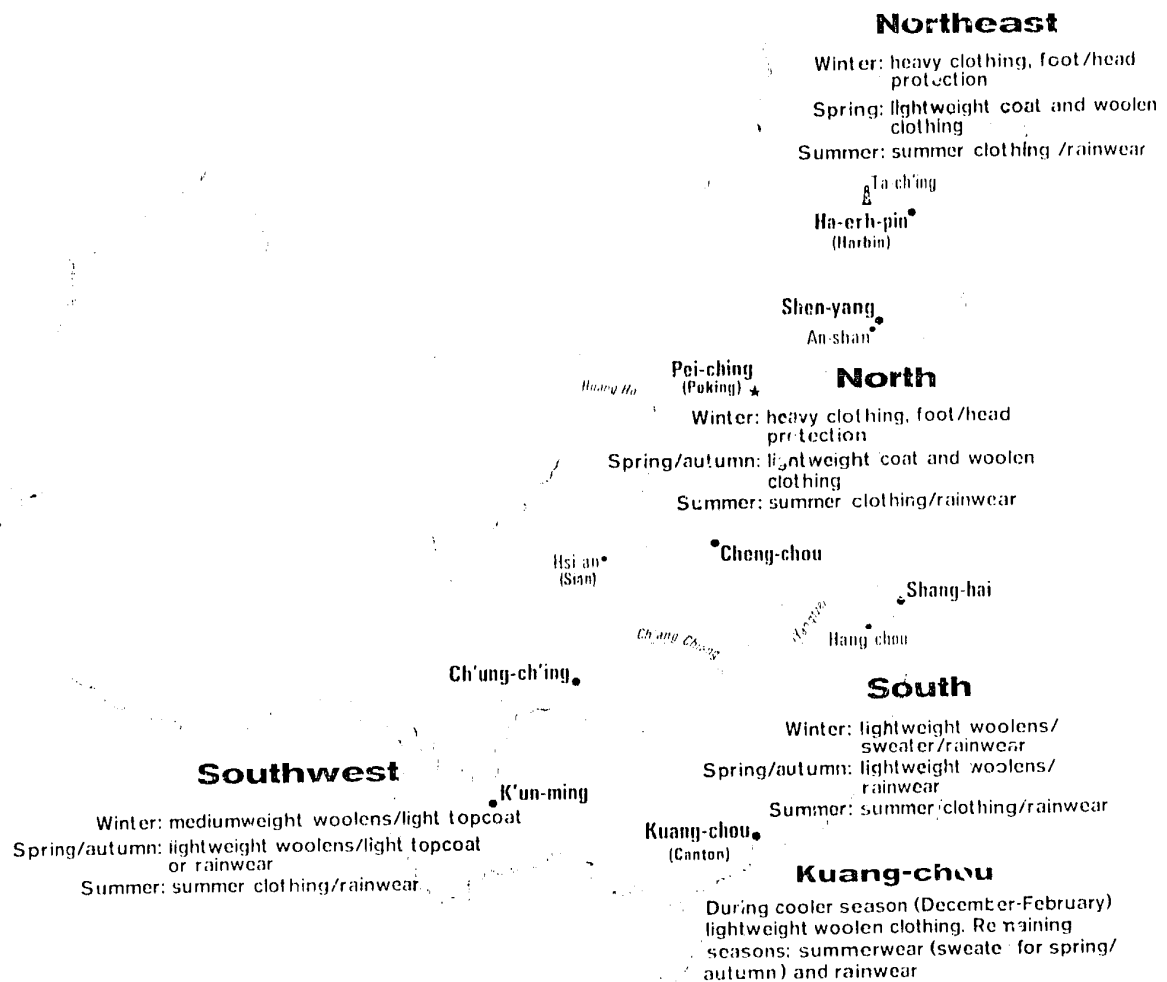
South: South China consists mainly of the middle and lower courses of the Yangtze River and its numerous tributaries. Landscapes reflect the warmer temperatures and much greater rainfall of this region; rice is grown in nearly all lowlands and a nearly year-round growing season permits two crops a year from most fields. Climatic conditions are comparable to those in the Gulf Coast states with one major exception: winter storms that produce widespread rain are largely absent in China. Summers are long, hot, sticky, and usually have plenty of rain and showery weather; autumn is usually pleasant, although some rain may fall; winters are brief with cooler temperatures. Shanghai, Hang-chou, and Ch'ung-ch'ing are often overcast, drizzly, damp, and unpleasant during much of the winter.

Southwest: Southwest China is set off from South China by terrain; most of it consists of a plateau 4,000 to 6,000 feet in elevation covered by hills, scattered mountains, and steep-sided river valleys. Southwest China's traditional isolation has only recently been broken; an occasional visitor may be permitted to visit K'un-ming or elsewhere in Yunnan Province. K'un-ming's Key Largo latitude is tempered considerably by its 6,000 foot elevation. Temperatures are cool during the largely rainless winter season; summers are pleasantly warm with frequent periods of rain.

Weather Conditions in China



China: Clothing Recommendations for Travel



Note: Except in Northeast China, rainwear of plastic or lightweight fabric would be preferred to heavier material.